

**In the Claims**

Please amend the claims as follows.

1 1.-15. (Canceled)

1 16. (Currently amended) A method for separating electronic components joined  
2 by a row-by-row array of solder interconnections comprising the steps of:

3 supplying an electronic component assembly having at least two components  
4 joined by a plurality of solder interconnections in a row-by-row array and  
5 having a first thickness;

6 providing a water jet cutting element having a thickness less than the first  
7 thickness of the solder interconnections;

8 positioning the water jet cutting element adjacent one of the rows of the solder  
9 interconnections;

10 applying a force to advance the water jet cutting element through the row of  
11 solder interconnections whereby a water jet from the water jet cutting  
12 element engages and cuts through the row of solder interconnections and  
13 severs the row of solder interconnections;

14 continuing the above steps for the remaining rows of solder interconnections to  
15 cut and sever all the rows of solder interconnections; and

16 separating the two components.

1        17.    (Currently amended) An apparatus for separating electronic components  
2        joined by a row-by-row array of solder interconnections comprising:  
3            securing means to hold an electronic assembly having at least two components  
4            joined by a plurality of solder interconnections in a row-by-row array and  
5            having a first thickness;  
6            a water jet cutting element having a thickness less than the thickness of the  
7            solder interconnections;  
8            positioning means to position the water jet cutting element adjacent one of the  
9            rows of solder interconnections;  
10          advancing means to force the water jet cutting element against the row of  
11          solder interconnections and through the solder interconnections whereby a  
12          water jet from the water jet cutting element cuts and severs the row of  
13          solder interconnections; and  
14          separating means to separate the two components when all the rows of solder  
15          interconnections have been cut and severed row-by-row by the water jet  
16          cutting element.

Please add the following new claims:

1 18. (New) The method of claim 16 wherein the water jet has a fluid pressure of  
2 about 20,000-60,000 psi.

1 19. (New) The method of claim 18 wherein the water jet has a thickness of  
2 about 0.002-0.040 inch.

1 20. (New) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the water jet from the water jet  
2 cutting element has a pressure of about 20,000-60,000 psi.

1 21. (New) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the water jet from the water jet  
2 cutting element has a thickness of about 0.002-0.040 inch.